

AMENDMENT

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended). A linker molecule, comprising at least one nucleic acid binding group covalently connected by a spacer group to at least one nanoparticle binding group adapted to bind a nanoparticle thereto, and a nanoparticle that is bound to said at least one nanoparticle binding group, wherein said nanoparticle comprises a metal selected from the group consisting of Fe, Co, Ni, Cu, Ru, Rh, Pd, Os, Ir, Pt, Ag, Au and combinations thereof.

2. (Previously Presented). The linker molecule according to claim 1, wherein said nucleic acid binding group is selected from the group consisting of intercalating agents, groove-binding agents, alkylating agents, and combinations thereof.

3. (Previously Presented). The linker molecule according to claim 2, wherein the intercalating agent is selected from the group consisting of acridines, anthraquinones, diazapyrenium derivatives, furanocoumarins, naphthalene diimides, naphthalene monoimides, phenanthridines, porphyrins, and metal coordination complexes containing planar, aromatic ligands.

4. (Previously Presented). The linker molecule according to claim 2, wherein the groove-binding agent is selected from the group consisting of bis-benzamidines, bis-benzimidazoles, lexitropsins, perylene diimides, phenylbenzimidazoles, porphyrins, pyrrole oligopeptides and viologens.

5. (Currently Amended). The linker molecule according to claim 2, wherein the alkylating agent is selected from the group consisting of aziridines, ~~2-chloroethane derivatives~~

alkylating agents derived from 2-chloroethane, epoxides, nitrogen mustards, sulfur mustards and metal coordination complexes comprising at least one leaving group ligand.

6. (Currently Amended). The linker molecule according to claim 5, wherein the metal coordination complexes that are alkylating agents are selected from the group of complexes consisting of Pt^{2+} , Pt^{4+} , Pd^{2+} , Ru^{2+} , Ru^{3+} , Rh^{1+} , Rh^{2+} , and Rh^{3+} comprising at least one ligand selected from the group consisting of halide, water, di(alkyl)sulfoxide, nitrate, sulfate, carboxylate, substituted carboxylate, carbonate, phosphate, nitrite, sulfite, and hydroxide.

7. (Previously Presented). The linker molecule according to claim 1, wherein the nanoparticle binding group forms covalent bonds with surface ligands on the nanoparticle or displaces existing surface ligands on the nanoparticle, or combinations thereof.

8. (Currently Amended). The linker molecule according to claim 1, wherein the nanoparticle binding group comprises at least one covalent bond forming functional group selected from the group consisting of carboxylic acids and derivatives thereof, sulfonic acids, amines, alcohols, thiols, aldehydes, ketones, isocyanates, isothiocyanates, ethers, and halides.

9. (Previously Presented). The linker molecule according to claim 1, wherein the nanoparticle binding group comprises at least one metal-binding group selected from the group consisting of amines, phosphines, thiols, disulfides, dithiocarbamates, dithiophosphates, dithiophosphonates, thioethers, thiosulfates, and thioureas.

10-30. (Cancelled).

31. (Currently Amended). The linker molecule according to claim 3, wherein said intercalating agent is a metallointercalator containing planar, aromatic ligands.

32. (Previously Presented) The linker molecule according to claim 3, wherein said intercalating agent is a psoralen.